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BARBARA A. MIKULSKI  
MARYLAND

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510  
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March 4, 1994

RECEIVED

Ms. Lauren J. Belzin  
Federal Communication Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

MAY 18 1994

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Dear Ms. Belzin:

I am writing to request your consideration of the attached correspondence from Mr. Richard Novotny. Please respond directly to Mr. Novotny and send a copy to Steve Crane of my staff.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

*Barbara A. Mikulski*

Barbara A. Mikulski  
United States Senator

BAM:sec  
Enclosure

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## MARYLAND SALTWATER SPORTFISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION, INC.

7626 Baltimore & Annapolis Blvd., Glen Burnie, MD 21060-3530

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MAY 18 1994

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

February 23, 1994

Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski  
United States Senate  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Mikulski,

The Maryland Saltwater Sportfishermen's Association (MSSA) would like to bring to your attention an issue of great concern to our 7,000 members. We have been made aware of a potential safety hazard that could develop in the recreational boating community. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is planning to charge the recreational boating public a \$7.00 annual user fee for the use of a VHF radio. We were informed that you would have to purchase this user fee for a mandatory 10 year license. This now makes an initial outlay of \$70 and in addition a \$35 or \$40 processing fee for your application. This will force many boaters not to carry a VHF marine radios on board their boat.

The ship station license was given free to recreational boaters until May of 1990 to individuals wishing to use a VHF marine radio. Since that time the FCC has charged an individual a \$35 processing fee to apply or renew their ship station license for a 5 year period. This was basically excepted by the recreational boating community. We feel that a VHF marine radio is vital piece of safety equipment. Every boat should have a VHF radio in case of any emergency breakdowns or a life threatening situation. In addition to the reasons stated above, recreational captains can also monitor any distress calls on the emergency call channel in order to give assistance to other boaters in need of help. Captains can monitor any changing weather conditions that could occur in a very short period of time while on the water.

We urge you to act immediately on behalf of the recreational boating community to have this user fee for a VHF radio granted a special exception. Please contact the

FCC

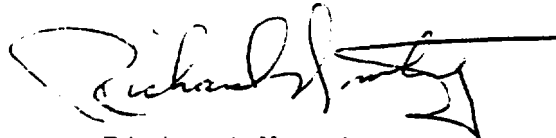
Page 2

FCC requesting a special exception for the cost of this user fee in the name of safety. It is extremely important that boaters carry these VHF radios for several safety factors.

I have enclosed a copy of a letter that was sent to Mr. William Caton, Secretary of the FCC, requesting him to grant a special exception for the \$70 cost of a 10 year license. We would like to request a copy of any correspondence that is sent to Mr. Caton from your office in reference to this very important issue.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Novotny", with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Richard Novotny  
Executive Director

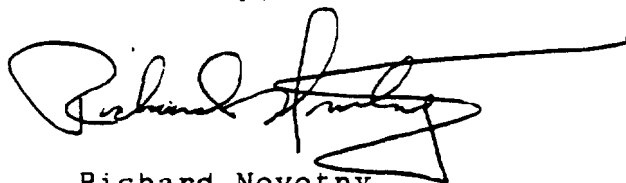
Enclosure

Owning and maintaining a boat is a very costly proposition. In general, most recreational boat captains have the required safety equipment or more on board their boats. In fact, more often than not, most boaters are safety conscience and carry additional safety equipment such as a VHF radio. Without a marine radio to contact the Coast Guard or a vessel in their immediate area they are putting their life and their guests lives in a life threatening situation. Accidents do happen daily throughout the U.S. on its many waterways. We feel that a VHF marine radio is a vital piece of equipment for the safety of our recreational boaters.

Boat captains monitor channel 16 for any distress calls in their immediate area in order to render assistance. Using your VHF to listen to the marine weather is very important while on the water for updating hazardous weather conditions approaching your area.

Do not force the recreation boater to abandon this very important piece of safety equipment on board their boat. We ask that you would reconsider the \$70.00 10 year user fee that is before you. We ask that a special exception be granted in the name of safety and give the ship station license free of charge to the recreational boater. We are not asking to remove the processing fee to process each application, but only to give some relief, and quite possibly saving of lives, by issuing a free VHF marine radio license.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Novotny", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard Novotny  
Executive Director



## MARYLAND SALTWATER SPORTFISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION, INC.

7626 Baltimore & Annapolis Blvd. Glen Burnie, MD 21062-3530

February 22, 1994

Mr. William Caton  
Secretary of FCC  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Mr. Caton,

I write to you on behalf of the Maryland Saltwater Sportfishermen's Association (MSSA) which is the largest sport fishing organization in Maryland. We have a membership role of over 7,000 conservation-minded members. The MSSA has been made aware of a proposed increase of fees associated with the VHF marine radio.

We strongly urge you to have the proposed cost of a 10 year license remain free of charge to recreational boaters. It is our understanding that a cost of \$70 would be included in obtaining or renewing your ship station license. In addition, a \$35 or \$40 processing fee would be added on the \$70 license fee. Many boaters just cannot afford this additional \$110.00 fee to own and operate a VHF radio. Seven dollars a year is not an unreasonable amount for recreational boaters to have the benefit of a VHF marine radio. The problem is the initial output of over \$100.00 to obtain your ship station license.

The MSSA is very concerned about recreational boaters not installing a VHF radio on board their boats due to this large increase of licensing fees. Safety should be the first order of business while on the water. Not only should you have the proper safety equipment, such as PFD's, horns or whistles, and navigational lights, but a signaling device such as a marine radio that could be used in emergency situations. We are now talking about a life threatening situation that could end in a loss of life because the vessel owner could not afford the cost of a ship station license fee.